

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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International Big Year birder kicks off ‘Ding’ Darling lecture series

Self-proclaimed “bird nerd” Noah Strycker set a worldwide Big Year record in 2015. His book about the experience, *Birding Without Borders: An Obsession, A Quest, and the Biggest Year in the World*, released late 2017.

Strycker starts out the 2018 “Ding” Darling Friday Lecture Series, on Friday, Jan. 19. He will be presenting three free programs at 10 a.m. and 2:30 and 1 p.m. in the “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center Auditorium at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island.

Oregon birder Strycker became the first human to see more than half of the planet’s bird species in a single, year-long, round-the-world birding trip. Associate editor of *Birding* magazine, the author has written two other well-regarded books about birds -- *The Thing With Feathers: The Surprising Lives of Birds and What They Reveal About Being Human*; and *Among Penguins: A Bird Man in Antarctica*. Strycker is a regular contributor of photography and articles to major birding magazines and other media. He blogs regularly for the American Birding Association.

Strycker will sign copies of his book, available in the Refuge Nature Store, following the two lectures. Proceeds from Nature Store sales directly benefit refuge wildlife, education, and research.

HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management sponsors the free 12-lecture series with support from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). The free lectures are held twice each Friday (except on Feb. 9). Aside from the Strycker lecture, times are 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. The season’s complete schedule is listed below. Book signings follow all starred (*) lectures.

Seating for the lectures is limited and available on a first-come basis. Early arrivals can save one seat each and then may explore the Visitor & Education Center or Indigo Trail before the lecture starts. Saved seats must be filled 15 minutes before lecture time.

As usual, Wildlife Drive closes on Friday, but visitors are welcome to enjoy the free Visitor & Education Center, Indigo Trail, and recreational opportunities at Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge's official recreation concession located at its Tarpon Bay Recreation Area.

Note: Opinions expressed in guest lectures do not necessarily reflect the views of refuge and DDWS management, staff, and board of directors.

For more information, call 239-472-1100 ext. 241 or log on to dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-and-film-series.

*Jan. 19 – Author Noah Strycker, *Birding Without Borders: An Obsession, a Quest, and the Biggest Year in the World*

*Jan. 26 - Author Jack Davis, *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea*

*Feb. 2 – Author James McClintock, *Lost Antarctica: Adventures in a Disappearing Land*

Feb. 9 – NO LECTURE

Feb. 16 – Impersonator Joe Weigand, “Theodore Roosevelt Speaks out on Conservation”

*Feb. 23 – Author Stephen Kress, *Puffin Project: The Improbable Quest to Bring a Beloved Sea Bird Back to Egg Rock*

*March 2 – Author Larry Nielsen, *Nature's Allies: Eight Conservationists Who Changed Our World*

*March 9 – Author Kevin Karlson, *Birds of Prey: Hawks, Eagles, Falcons, and Vultures of North America*

*March 16 – Author Tom Butler, *Wildlands Philanthropy: The Great American Tradition*

*March 23 – Photographer-sound recordist Gerrit Vyn, *The Living Bird: 100 Years of Listening to Nature*

*March 30 – Artist and author Dawn and Blair Witherington, *Florida's Living Beaches: A Guide for the Curious Beachcomber*

April 6 – Mote Marine Researcher Dr. Erinn Muller, “Coral Restoration”

April 13 – Avian researcher Dr. Kenneth Meyer, “Swallow-tailed Kites: 10,000 Miles to Survival”

*starred lecture indicates book signing to follow

ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge's mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop proceeds.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com.

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